

Beneath the golden grasslands of Marshall Mesa lie clues to its amazing history: prehistoric swamps and forests, hard-working coal miners and railroads, ranches and livestock. As you enjoy the trails, keep your eyes open for signs of the past.

Marshall Mesa's Glorious Grasslands



Close your eyes and imagine the Great Plains in the year 1800. An inland ocean of waving grass extended from the Rockies eastward for over a thousand unbroken miles to Indiana; and from Texas north to Alberta, Canada. The prairie provided lush forage for vast herds of bison, elk, deer and pronghorn. Prairie dogs, black footed ferrets, badgers, wolves, eagles, prairie chickens and sharp-tailed grouse made their homes among the rustling blades.

Today a mere 2% of the original tallgrass prairie remains. Mixed grass prairie is more plentiful, but most of it has also been converted to other uses. Much of the original flora and fauna are gone or confined to pro-



Photos:
Blue Grama, our state grass; Burrowing Owl (Perry Conway)



Photos: Cottontail
Rabbit; Scarlet
Gaura

tected areas, remnant populations hanging on among the fragments of what used to be one of the planet's greatest ecosystems.

Now, look about you and behold Marshall Mesa, where tallgrass and mixed grass prairies intermingle with ponderosa pines. As you explore its trails, get close enough to notice the tiny details of the prairie: delicate sand lilies and minute barrel cacti peeking through the grass, a grasshopper methodically chewing a stem, prairie dogs chirping from their burrows, or a meadow-lark's sweet song.



The Southern Grasslands Habitat Conservation Area

The largest remaining parcel of intact grassland in the Boulder area, over 3,000 acres unbroken by roads or trails, lies just to the south of Marshall Mesa. To protect this irreplaceable resource and its treasure trove of rare and sensitive species, off-trail travel through the Habitat Conservation Area, or HCA, is prohibited without a permit (see the map in this brochure for HCA boundaries). However, you can still enjoy the prairie from the existing trail system. To obtain an off-trail permit, please visit www.osmppermits.org or call 303-441-3440.

LEAVE NO TRACE ON OPEN SPACE & MOUNTAIN PARKS



Manage Your Dog

Others may not appreciate your dog's company. If you are not sure, ask before allowing your dog to approach. Keep your dog nearby and under control. Carry and use a leash as required.

Pick Up Poop

Phew! Dog poop stinks, causes severe damage to the environment, and others can step in it. Pack a pick-up bag and always pick up your dog's poop — wherever it's left.



Stay on Trail

Traveling on trail leaves room for wildlife and their homes. Shortcutting trails causes erosion. Get muddy! Step right through puddles. Boots dry overnight; plants take years to recover.

Trash Your Trash

Please take out all trash — yours and others'. Even organic garbage such as orange peels, apple cores and food scraps, take years to break down. Animals which feed on trash often die!



Leave It as You Find It

Picking flowers, collecting rocks, or picking berries may not seem to be a big deal, but it means others won't have a chance to enjoy them. Millions of people visit Open Space & Mountain Parks. If each takes something, what will remain?



Share Our Trails

We all enjoy Open Space & Mountain Parks in different ways. Pay attention, expect to encounter others and be courteous. Yield to all.



Open Space & Mountain Parks

www.osmp.org

(303) 441-3440

P.O. Box 791

Boulder, CO 80306

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Marshall Mesa Trails Guide



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Hard-working History

A century ago, Marshall Mesa was famous as one of the most important coal mining areas in the state. There were 51 official coal



mines in Marshall, but there were probably many other undeclared mines and tunnels since mines were taxed. The first coal mine was operated by William and Nancy Kitchens in 1859, but it was sold to Joseph Marshall in 1866. In

1868, President Andrew Johnson presented Marshall with legal rights to all the area's coal.

The mines attracted families from the East, as well as many European immigrants. Miners lived in ethnic neighborhoods within the town of Marshall where they could speak their native languages: "Frenchtown," "Downtown" where Italians lived, and "Fox-town" where English and Irish made their homes near the Fox Mine.

Coal mining was brutal, dangerous work and many miners were killed or injured in accidents. The hard life made Marshall one of the toughest towns in Colorado. Because of the hazards and low pay, Marshall's coal miners tried many times to unionize. Labor disputes added to the violence of the town.



Coal companies hired tough guards to protect their property from sabotage. During the strike of 1906, National Guard troops set up machine guns overlooking the town. State police killed six miners during a strike in 1928. Miners were finally allowed to unionize in 1932, but the depression and higher-quality coal from Wyoming were bringing an end to Marshall's mining days. The last of the mines closed in the 1940s.



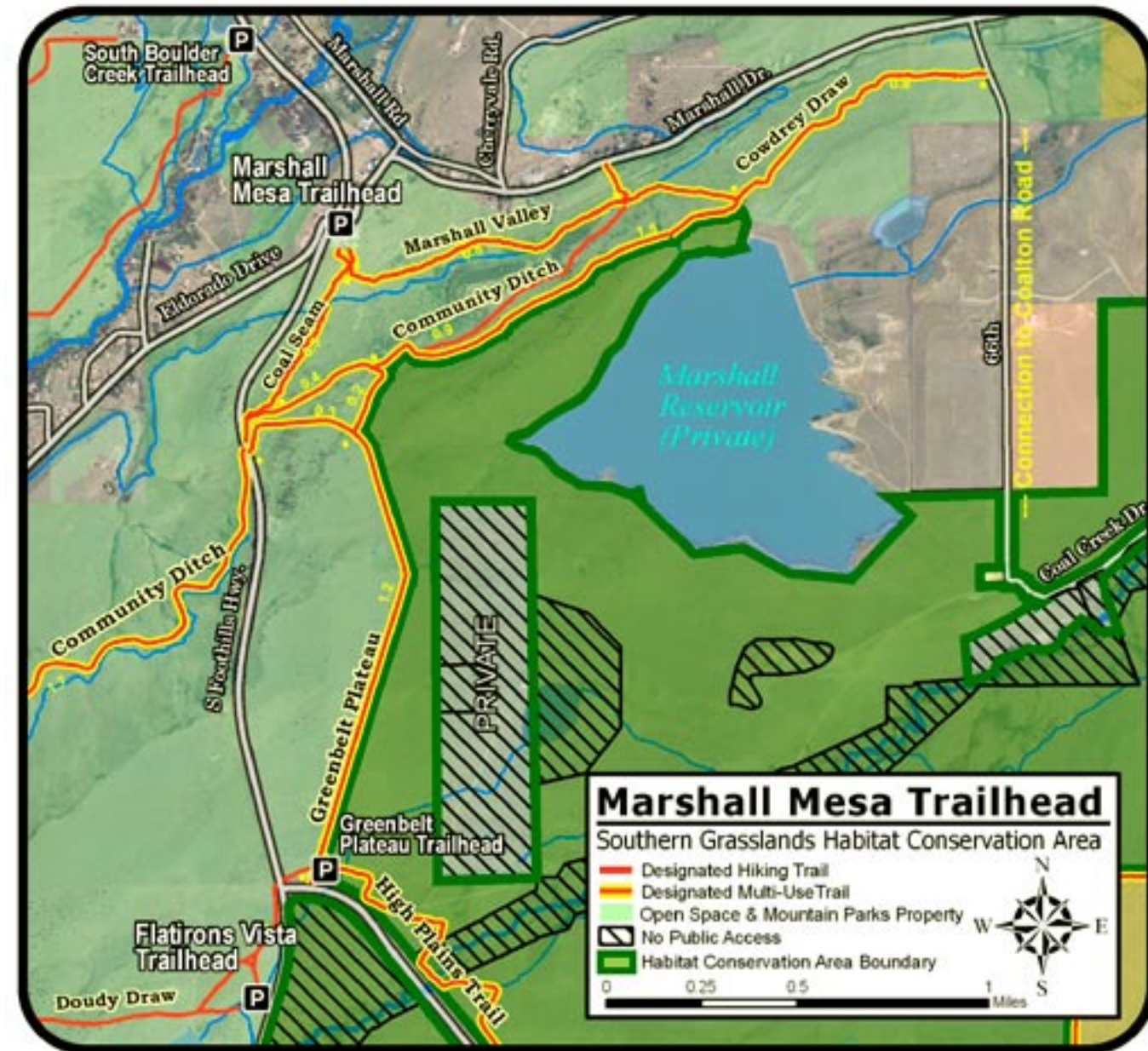
Photos: Italian immigrant women gather water; the saloon in Frenchtown; view of Foxtown (now site of Cherryvale Road); Joseph Marshall.

As you walk these trails, notice how mining affected the land-

scape. Most of the hills have been hollowed out with invisible tunnels and chambers. Sink holes are common where tunnels have subsided or collapsed. Old railroad grades crisscross the hill-sides, and in some places you may see remains of water tanks, machinery and abandoned structures. A few underground fires still burn on exposed coal seams, set by blasting or perhaps striking miners or illicit Prohibition-era stills.

For a more detailed account of Marshall's history, pick up a copy of Joanna Sampson's brochure *Walking through History on Marshall Mesa* or download it at www.osmp.org.

OSMP Marshall Mesa Guide



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